

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 08461 112358Z

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3654

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8461

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, EC

SUBJECT: GOE POLICIES REGARDING FOREIGN FISHING

REF.: A) QUITO A-23, MARCH 19, 1974 B) QUITO 8272

C) STATE 271438

1. IN THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS EMBASSY AND CONGEN GUAYAQUIL HAVE TOUCHED BASE WITH VARIOUS SOURCES IN FISHING INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES, AND FOREIGN OFFICE TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THERE WERE ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN GOE POLICIES TOWARDS FOREIGN FISHING.

2. WE HAVE NOW CONFIRMED THAT NEW REGULATIONS GOVERNING ISSUANCE OF MATRICULAS AND LICENSES FOR FOREIGN-FLAG FISHING VESSELS FOR 1975 HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND WILL LIKELY BE PROMULGATED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

3. REGULATIONS APPARENTLY CONTAIN TWO NEW FEATURES. FIRST, THEY WILL DESIGNATE CERTAIN COASTAL AREAS AS EXCLUSIVE FISHERIES ZONES FOR LOCAL ARTESANAL FISHERMEN. SECOND MEASURE WILL BE TO CONFINE ISSUANCE OF LICENSES

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PAGE 02 QUITO 08461 112358Z

TO THOSE FOREIGN-FLAG FISHING VESSELS WHICH ARE UNDER

600 NET REGISTERED TONS.

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR DECEMBER 11, FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY (AYALA) CONFIRMED EXISTENCE OF FOREGOING MEASURES IN NEW REGULATIONS AND SAID THAT THEY SHOULD BE ISSUED IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. HE STRESSED THAT GOE INTENDED TO CONTINUE ISSUING LICENSES TO FOREIGN-FLAG VESSELS WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS STATED ABOVE AND HE OBSERVED THAT LAST YEAR ONLY THREE US VESSELS OF MORE THAN 600 NET REGISTERED TONS HAD PURCHASED FISHING LICENSES. HE DOUBTED, THEREFORE, THAT THE CONTEMPLATED MEASURES WOULD HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON LICENSED US FISHING ACTIVITIES OFF ECUADOREAN COAST. IN RESPONSE TO POINT MADE BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR AYALA STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT MEASURES WERE NOT DIRECTED AT THE US AND HE STRONGLY HOPED THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ANY COMPLICATING EFFECT ON OUR GENERALLY IMPROVING RELATIONS. AYALA ALSO MADE POINT THAT ONE PURPOSE OF TONNAGE LIMITATION WAS CONSERVATION SINCE LARGER PURSE SEINERS ARE FELT TO HAVE A DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT ON MARINE LIFE.

5. AS REGARDS CONFISCATION OF CATCH MENTIONED IN PARA ONE REF C, DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT ONE OF THE FEATURES OF ECUADOR'S NEW FISHERIES LEGISLATION PROMULGATED LAST FEBRUARY IS PROVISION FOR CONFISCATION OF CATCH OF FOREIGN VESSELS APPREHENDED FISHING WITHOUT LICENSES. (FOR FULL TEXT OF PROVISION SEE ARTICLE 87 OF FISHERIES LAW REPORTED IN REF A.) ONLY ADDITIONAL WRINKLE THAT WE HAVE HEARD FROM INDUSTRY SOURCE IN GUAYAQUIL IS THAT IN CASES WHERE FOREIGN BOATS ARE APPREHENDED GOE IS CONSIDERING OBLIGING VESSELS TO BUY BACK CONFISCATED CATCH BECAUSE OF LACK OF LOCAL FREEZING SPACE.
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